/196 cont./

[673] [754] [627] --Vengeance; if someone believes himself to be the victim of witchcraft, he must under no circumstances engage in counterwitchcraft or invoke his ancestors against his enemy. He may ask only for the protection of the ɔbia. It is Odun who [784] will avenge him by sooner or later killing the evil-doer.

[683] --Violence in any form whatever. It is regarded as a particularly serious offense against the laws of Odun to strike with an armed hand and to make human blood flow (1).

[684]

1. That explains the strictness with which the society of the Refugee Blacks limits the right of punishment granted to the wronged husband, who must strike only with bare fists in front of witnesses, never in the bush nor on the river. Fear of seeing human blood flow explains the reticence of the Boni toward minor surgical operations.

[826] [952]

[641] [586] --Any attack on personal liberty by material or moral coercion; in particular, neither a man nor woman may be constrained to remain in a marriage which has ceased to please him; nobody may be forced to reside here or there.

[832] The forms of magic so popular among West Indians, aimed at capturing a person's love, are for this reason rejected by the Refugee Blacks and considered as a form of wisi.

[769] --Any evocation of the spirits of the dead, even to ask them for protection, other than in the public ceremonies [754] provided for by custom. Thus nobody must go to the cemetery to pray alone on his parents' grave. Whoever would do that would immediately be considered as wisima.

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which people do not hesitate to come to ask for remedies or opinions, in spite of the evil they have done to the lineage and perhaps will do tomorrow. It is even allowable to wonder whether people do not prefer to consult the most wicked divinities, for they are believed to be stronger.

The kunu focuses, turns aside toward high purposes the blind forces of superstition, fear, and rancor. Several authors who have written on the Refugee Blacks have stated that calamities were almost unfailingly attributed to sorcery (wisi). This is a grave error due to the fact that they believed they could transpose to the Refugee Blacks what is observed among the Creole populations of Surinam. If this were true, no positive social bond could exist. We believe we can assert that among the Refugee Blacks divination lays the blame on sorcery in only scarcely a tenth of the misfortunes. Here, among other examples, are several typical cases concerning Boni who worked with us or whom we have known especially well:

--In 1948, Fintiman (Dju) falls ill (violent pains in the legs); kunu of a Kāntamasu.

--In 1948, Galmo (Papaïston) is accidentally hurt (gun backfire): kunu.

--In 1949, Diolè, captain of the Dju lo, is smitten with hemiplegia and remains paralyzed. He dies in 1951: kunu of a Papa gadu.

--In 1950, a Saramaka is killed in a hunting accident (a gun in poor condition went off by itself): [illegible]ku (accident).

--In 1951, Kanayen (Kotika) drowns while sailing at night on the river: wisi.

--In 1951, Loka (Dju) dies at the age of 70: kunu of an Ampuku.

--In 1951, F... (Dju) is seriously hurt by the falling of a branch while cutting his clearing: kunu of a yɔrka.

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75 784 776 It is important not to confuse the kunu with the sufferings which other divinities can arbitrarily make men undergo. The kunu has a systematic character. But a divinity theoretically beneficent, and which has come into a man after being called on, may also from time to time bring misfortunes if such is its whim of the moment.

752 776 784 In 1949, G... (Dju) was busy cooking a crab in the house of his mother D... A machete which was fastened to the wall suddenly detached itself and wounded him in the right hand. Now his mother had an Ampuku which had imposed [787] [428] the crab on her as kina. This Ampuku, immediately called on, revealed that it really was it which had struck G..., for it did not like to see D...'s son eat crab (note that G... was not at all held to the observance of this kina, for no kina is transmitted from mother to son).

784 775 613 769 Neither must the kunu exercised by a yɔrka be confused with the vengeance that a dead person can exercise against the members of his own lineage in order to punish them for having neglected their duties.

Punishment inflicted by an ancestor of the lineage seems for the Boni to be a notion distinct from that of the kunu. Vengeance exercised by a yɔrka upon its own lineage is regarded as exceptional and devoid of the inexorable and definitive character of the kunu, but they assume it to be [762] possible. They cited to us the case of Yali (Loka), who [753] committed suicide when accused of sorcery by the people [761] of his lineage. Since then, his yɔrka has caused sicknesses and deaths in his own village.

776 784 613 [761] Conversely, a god which exercises the kunu upon a lineage may in certain cases intervene in favor of this lineage if such is its whim of the moment. Thus the death of Diamanti (Aw.B.2, Asisi village, † in 1955) is attributed to the god which exercises the kunu on the village of L'Enfant Perdu and whose bearer was Péechina. Diamanti had wronged someone of this village and the god had intervened against her.

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Not just anyone may resort to divination on behalf of someone else: only the eldest have the right to do it, and it has happened that the grand man punished offenders severely.

Fate. The Refugee Blacks do not attribute all misfortunes to suprahuman causes. They have the notion of natural accident, [illegible]. They say [illegible] miti mi, or again ogi miti mi, misfortune met me. They also accept the idea of natural death. They usually regard as natural death that of the very old, the infirm from birth, and sickly children.

Divination blames fate in ten to 20 per cent of accidents. It is the usual explanation for hunting accidents.

/238/ Magic Forces

As we have shown, the Refugee Blacks consider beings and things as a world of forces capable of acting on one another, outside of time and space, according to laws which men cannot understand but of which they believe they have a partial and empirical knowledge transmitted by tradition since the time of the ancestors. They distinguish negative magic forces, wisi, which have the effect of diminishing the vital force of men, which makes them sick or kills them, and positive magic forces, obia, which come from the gods: the obia comes to increase the vital force of men, giving them protection, immunity, or knowledge. But no power is in essence a principle of good or evil; nothing is impossible for him who knows the formulas; this is why the magic of the Refugee Blacks is reduced to a perpetual and indecisive struggle between obia and wisi.

Wisi. Wisi is sorcery in the African sense of the term, that is, the use of magic procedures to harm others; wisi is for the Refugee Blacks the pre-eminently criminal act, at the same time against morals and against society. The struggle against

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751 [1787] Possession by a Kumãnti gives, they say, invulnerability during the time of the trance, but in his ordinary state the individual remains vulnerable (they say only that in case of danger the gita "rises" immediately).

Someone who has a man nãnga ɔbia has no trances of possession, but they state that he is permanently invulnerable (except for breaking of the kina). In order to obtain this ɔbia one must have himself "washed" for a very long time by an elder who knows the leaves in question. He delivers them already crushed so that no one may be able to know this secret outside of the son or nephew to whom he bequeaths it.

It is necessary to continue to be washed four times a year for 15 days each time, to keep up the force of the ɔbia.

[515] During these 15 days one bathes three times a day, in secret (in principle nobody knows that you have this ɔbia).

[834] During these periods one must have no relation with a woman, even to talk to her.

They state that someone who has a man nãnge ɔbia can be struck by blows of a machete and even receive a gunshot with impunity.

[1173] They believe that this ɔbia, in the past called man feti ɔbia, was obtained by the ancestors at the time of the wars against the whites; still today it inspires an unshakeable confidence. /250/ In October, 1952 we saw M..., a man of 45 [164] [1152] with great good sense, make a deep gash in his leg while cutting a liana, in spite of his ɔbia. Doubt did not cross his mind for a second: he told us that certainly he had unknowingly eaten something contrary to the kina of the ɔbia. Since we were working near some villages, he went immediately to find the master of the remedy to have the power restored. For nothing in the world would he have left for a long round of work in the bush with the feeling that he was at the mercy of an accident.

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841 Woman's magic power. The Refugee Blacks assume that a woman, during her menstrual periods, is impure and has the power to destroy the power of ɔbia. So during these periods she must withdraw into a special hut, munu ɔsu, and prepare her meals in special dishes; she may not prepare her husband's food, for by doing this she would destroy the power of his ɔbia, and must abstain from touching objects he habitually uses, particularly his gun, which would lose its good points for shooting. Even in the little farming habitations which consist of only several huts, one may be sure that one of them serves as a munu ɔsu.

841 The munu ɔsu are very simple sheds built by the women
203 themselves, using reclaimed materials taken from huts being
462 demolished; some belong to one woman only, for others, three
[465] or four women get together. They have recourse to men only for assembling the framework, remunerating them with several cans of couac or several baskets of yams. /end/

841 /255/ A man who has a powerful ɔbia like the man nɛ̃ŋge ɔbia must abstain from speaking to a woman who has her menses.

[751] The Boni assume there are women wicked enough to willfully hide their menses in order to destroy the power of a man's ɔbia, but he who has a good man nɛ̃ŋge ɔbia cannot be a dupe: the iron circle warns him of the danger by squeezing his arm.

184 841 68 According to Mr. W. F. van Lier, the act of willfully hiding her menses is for the Djuka one of the gravest offenses a woman can commit, and the most severe punishments are inflicted on her. It is not the same with the Boni: in such a case a woman risks only being insulted and banned.

752 834 171 Another deeply rooted belief among the Refugee Blacks, and which exists with many Creoles, is the necessity for the

752 834 [191] /255 cont./ boiaman who treats a wound made by a firearm to observe chastity during the whole duration of the treatment. It is for this reason that the Boni hesitate to have gunshot wounds cared for in hospitals.

784 [262] Kina. The interdictions of the Refugee Blacks generally have to do with food. There are five categories of them to our knowledge:

[753] --Bwasi kina, basic kina, mark of patrilineages, the breaking of which gives leprosy;

--Akka kina, often called gadu kina, established by divination and believed to be imposed by the akka;

--Gadu kina, mark of possession by a divinity;

--Obia kina, interdiction attached to each object involving a magic power, and which must be observed for this power to last;

--Finally, local kina, particularly the kina de, days of rest, going back to the idea of the day of rest of the local divinity. They observe, for example, that the Mana River has a kina de on Sunday. The Saramaka observe it strictly. The Boni we took on the Mana in 1949 went to find out from the Saramaka, and asked us to stop navigation on Sunday, [648] for this kina was very urgent. It is noteworthy however that the Boni bow in such circumstances before the will of the Europeans, as with respect to their own kina de of Friday; in effect they are assuming that if they are ordered to be on duty, it is the European alone who bears the responsibility for breaking the kina.

[428] [114] [613] It is possible that the kina alluded to by Mr. W. F. Van Lier and which, among the Djuka, would be imposed on a whole matrilineage are also local kina; in any case no kina is transmissible through the mother, all the Refugee Blacks are explicit on that point.